

# Lower Mississippi Valley Initiative

States in the Lower Mississippi Valley have banded in a joint venture, the Lower Mississippi Valley Initiative (LMVI), to address the needs of that region. Initiative participants recognize that, first and foremost, agricultural producers must remain on the land. LMVI supports farm programs that supplement producer income, however, this initiative is focused primarily on programs and policies that result in natural resource conservation, initiatives that contribute to the green box of the World Trade Agreements.

LMVI leaders include the American Farm Bureau Federation, state departments of agriculture, land grant universities, 1890 Institutions, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, and other agricultural organizations in each state.

## Multi-State Environmental Stewardship

LMVI is expected to culminate in the establishment of a strong reaffirmation of national policy that supports the non-regulatory, locally led approach to environmental stewardship.

Actions taken as part of this initiative should lead to sufficient support for research, education and technical assistance, as well as financial incentives for producers, so that those involved in agriculture will be able to voluntarily meet society's environmental stewardship demands and still remain part of a profitable industry.

For more information on the Lower Mississippi Valley Initiative, please visit our webpage:  
<http://www.agctr.lsu.edu/lmvi>

# Lower Mississippi Valley Initiative

People Working Together for Clean Water  
Clean Air  
Productive Soil  
Safe Food  
Fish and Wildlife Habitats  
Beautiful Landscapes

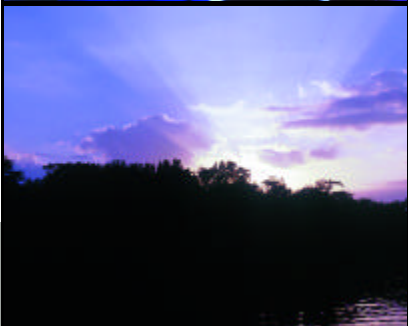
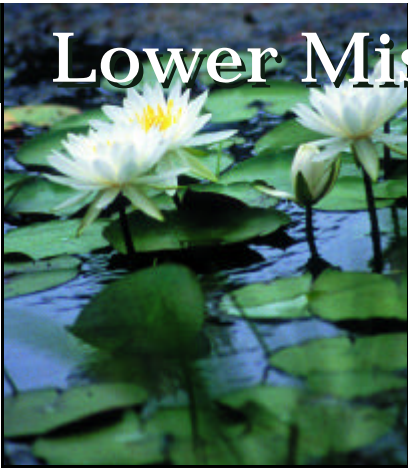
## Multi-State Environmental Stewardship

**What is the Lower Mississippi Valley Initiative?**  
Leaders of a variety of federal, state and private organizations have formed a partnership to address economic, conservation, and environmental concerns in the Lower Mississippi River Valley. This grass-roots effort to address water quality and a variety of other issues affecting agriculture and forestry in the area is known as the **Lower Mississippi Valley Initiative (LMVI)** and involves agricultural leaders and others from Louisiana, Arkansas, Mississippi, Tennessee, Kentucky, Missouri, Texas and Oklahoma. These leaders have agreed to develop a strategic plan for locally-led environmental stewardship that is cost-effective, non-regulatory, incentive-based, and sensitive to the economic needs of agricultural producers.



Louisiana	Mississippi	Kentucky	Texas
Arkansas	Tennessee	Missouri	Oklahoma

- Objectives of LMVI are to:
- Increase public awareness of the importance of agriculture.
  - Frame the link between agricultural profitability and environmental stewardship.
  - Affect key conservation-related provisions of the 2002 Farm Bill by supporting existing programs as a conservation base and engaging in dialogue and debate on other conservation issues that support LMVI objectives.



## Core LMVI Principles

- Focus on private lands and encourage LMVI leadership from the agricultural community
- Support policy and programs necessary to maintain the economic viability of agriculture and keep farmers on the land
- Utilize non-regulatory/voluntary approaches
- Develop and implement locally led projects through accelerated technical and financial assistance
- Provide technical assistance based on decisions derived from sound-science
- Achieve wide public and governmental support and coordinate continually
- Enhance the research and extension capacity of existing Land Grant University systems
- Forge partnerships with nonagricultural agencies and organizations to promote, develop, and implement cost-effective, scientifically-based conservation programs and site-specific practices in the Lower Mississippi Valley



### Key LMVI Public Support Drivers

The participants in LMVI recognize that key areas of public concern will drive the initiative. They also believe that a strategy and plans will have to exhibit a capability to satisfy these concerns and meet society's requests to garnish additional monies from the national treasury. These key drivers are listed below:

**Plant nutrient reduction** - Numerous state and federal water quality goals target the reduction of nutrients in surface and ground water as a major environmental objective. Specific sediment and turbidity reductions are also typically included in many nutrient reduction objectives. Voluntary long-term actions aimed at reducing Gulf of Mexico hypoxia call for the implementation of nutrient reduction Best Management Practices (BMPs) in

states included in the Mississippi River Basin. Additionally, voluntary, research-based BMPs must be implemented in impaired sub-basins where Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) must be addressed.

**Wetlands restoration** - Public support for no net loss of wetlands is high nationally. Wetland restoration via the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP), the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP) has significantly benefited society through the provisions of increased wildlife habitat, improved water quality, and enhanced aesthetic values within rural landscapes. Restored wetland buffers strategically placed between agriculture production fields and streams can significantly reduce the amount of nutrients and sediment reaching surface waters.

**Fish and wildlife habitat** - When farmers are paid to take marginal agricultural lands out of production and placed in a conservation practice, fish and wildlife benefit, and in turn, society benefits. This win-win approach helps keep farmers in business while improving habitat for our nations vast fish and wildlife resources.

**Riparian buffers** - Research has proven that riparian buffers can be very effective in reducing sediment and nutrient transport from agricultural fields to streams. This concept has also been very effective in reducing sediment runoff from tree harvest activities conducted near streams--Streamside Management Zones (SMZs).

**Water development and conservation** - Severe drought and more extreme climatic conditions have caused many states to consider the

development of comprehensive surface and groundwater management policies. With agriculture currently requiring approximately 60 percent of all extracted groundwater for irrigation of crops, the development of alternative surface water sources will be crucial. Additionally, sound research and education/outreach initiatives related to the conservation of water currently used in irrigation will also require significant enhancement nationwide.

**Invasive species** - Research and education linked to the management of numerous invasive plant and animal species must be part of a comprehensive natural resource conservation plan. In many regions of the country, invasive species have become a biological disaster that threatens the existence of many native species and our ability to maintain sustainable cropping systems.

## LMVI Objectives

- Increase public awareness of the importance of agriculture
- Frame agricultural profitability - environmental stewardship linkage
- Advocate a non-regulatory, science based approach
- Identify producer incentive programs required for success. Programs targeted for improvement, increased acreage caps and significantly increased funding in LMVI include the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP), Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP), Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP) and Forestry Incentive Program (FIP)
- Establish conservation technical and financial assistance funding requirements and impact key conservation-related provisions of the 2002 Farm Bill
- Identify essential research, extension, and technical assistance needed to assure success